

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views February 2004

Check the web site to keep up-to-date with events: www.owb.co.nz

Please book for all seminars and walks at the Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

Meet at the Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane for all events.

Sunday, 22 February 2 pm	Sunday Walk: The Nature Trail: This walk through the original forest preserved by Job Wilton 150 years ago is steep in places, but has many interesting trees, vines and perching plants. Time: 2 hrs. Leader: Dr. John Dawson.
Thursday, 4 March 7.30 pm	March Seminar Series Dr . K.C.Burns:-“Vines and epiphytes of our sub-tropical forest..”
Thursday, 11 March 7.30 pm	March Seminar Series Dr. Rod Hitchmough:-“Native Lizards”
Saturday, 13 March 9 am to 11 am	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, 14 March 2 pm	Stepping out: Jungle walk Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Thursday, 18 March 7.30 pm	March Seminar Series Dr. Dave Burton:- “How to be sluggish!– Native Slugs”
Sunday, 21 March 2 pm	Stepping out: The Kauri Grove and Pukatea Gully. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Thursday, 25 March 7.30 pm	March Seminar Series Robyn Smith:-Threatened Plants of the South Coast”
Sunday, 28 March 2 pm	Stepping Out: Pilgrimage to the Giant rimu and its companions Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Sunday, 25 April 2 pm	Trains, Trees and Tourism – an historical walk Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Sandra Clarke</i>
Sunday, 23 May 2 pm	Juveniles and Adults: come and see and speculate
Thursday, 16 June 7.30 pm	Trust Annual General Meeting
Sunday, June 27 2pm	Identification workshop and walk

To contact the Trust Board:

Address: Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, 160 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington.

Chairman Athol Swann, Ph. 472 8417 Email: athol.swann@paradise.net.nz
Secretary Margaret Crimp, Ph 475 3263 Email: m.crimp@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer Roger Crimp, Ph. 475 3263 Email: r.crimp@xtra.co.nz

N.B: Margaret and Roger will be away from April 6 until May 30. For information in their absence contact the Chairman.

MARCH SEMINAR SERIES.

You all know about the trees and the plant collections! This is your chance to hear about some of the lesser known inhabitants of Otari-Wilton's Bush. Come along to the Otari Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane, 160 Wilton Road, each Thursday evening in March at 7.30pm to hear the following fascinating talks:

- March 4** **Dr. KC Burns, SBS, VUW:** - "Vines and Epiphytes (perching plants) of our subtropical rain forest."
- March 11** **Dr. Rod Hitchmough, DOC:** - "Native Lizards"
- March 18** **Dr. Dave Burton, SBS, VUW:** - "How to be sluggish – Native slugs"
- March 25** **Robyn Smith, Curator Otari-Wilton's Bush:** - Threatened Plants of the South Coast..

In past years we have found these seminars very popular and as there is limited seating available at our venue, it is advisable to make early bookings by telephone to the Treehouse:. **499 1400**

There will be a gold coin donation.

Stepping Out. --- March Walks.

(These form part of the WCC Stepping Out programme)

Sunday 14. Jungle Walk. The New Zealand forest has many similarities to tropical forests. Join our guides and explore the tropical features of our rain forest. 1.5 to 2 hours

Sunday 21. The Kauri Grove and Pukatea Gully. Explore a kauri plantation established in 1929, then descend to an adjacent gully where there are ancient pukatea and mahoe. 2 hours.

Sunday 28. Pilgrimage to the Giant Rimu and its companions. The 800 year old rimu and not much younger companions are found in a grove of original forest on the Blue Trail. 2 hours.

..Milk Cartons -no more please. The response to the request for these for use in the nursery has been overwhelming. We now have sufficient to last for some months. Thank you for your support

Report from Athol Swann, Chairman

The past few months have been notable for the changes within our Trust Board. The major impact has of course been the unexpected illness and death just prior to Christmas of Bill Winstanley our friend and dynamic chairman for some 1 ½ years. We are fortunate that John Dawson is willing to return to the Board to provide continuity in the botanic knowledge and leadership for Education, Research, Guiding and Hosting. Also, Roger Crimp is rapidly picking up the Treasurer's role and accounting system developed by Glenn Denby since our incorporation. However the changes do not stop there, and we are hopeful that we can co-opt shortly, a replacement for Leanne Killalea who resigned in December, on her return to employment at the Botanic Gardens. Filling this slot will also help us to cover the absence of Margaret and Roger in April / May while they travel to interesting venues overseas.

On review, we believe eight Trustees is an appropriate number for the anticipated workload for at least a year ahead and as will be seen later in this newsletter, we appeal for early expressions of interest from members to volunteer as candidates at our Annual General Meeting scheduled for June 16 after Margaret & Roger return from their holiday. We welcome continuing interest, involvement and support from our members as well as their ideas for improvement.

Looking ahead, we are progressing two new Trust projects;

One is a **Feasibility Study for an Education Centre** at Otari.

Bill was initiator of this project and his vision was a stand alone building devoted to native New Zealand flora and insects found in our Reserve, complementing the significant plant collections, with adequate lecture and research facilities incorporated. We hope that this initial feasibility project will identify a strong interest and justification for progressing such a proposal. Any contribution to this study from members will be most welcome.

The second project is the construction of a **Boardwalk and Protection Railing for the ancient Northern Rata** in the 'Wild Garden'

There is a serious concern that the health of the Rata is being compromised by compaction and trampling at its base. When appropriate plans for the structure are available we will seek contractor interest and funding assistance.

As convenor of the **Trading sub-Committee**, I must appeal for assistance for our card sales activity. Over the past few months Pam Howse has been handling this very effectively for me. Pam, who has also been a Tuesday volunteer helper in the nursery for some considerable time has returned to her family base in Central Otago while her husband is on assignment in Afghanistan heading up a New Zealand reconstruction group. The assistance I would appreciate involves the follow up contact and restocking of our established card outlets and seeking out possible new card sales outlets - a task which can be quite satisfying and not too onerous. If you would like to help please contact me.

Finally, we on the Trust Board would like to compliment the Council managers on the acceptance of Otari - Wilton's Bush as a 'National Garden of Significance' by the National Garden Trust, being one of eleven Nationwide so designated.

Bill Winstanley.

Sadly Bill Winstanley, Chairperson of the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, died recently after a sudden and unexpected bout of cancer, surprising for someone who had always enjoyed robust good health.

Bill embraced life with enthusiasm and lived it to the full. He was born in Liverpool but emigrated to New Zealand as a young man and had a variety of jobs in Government Departments including Forestry, where his great interest in New Zealand native plants and animals probably began.

As a mature student he studied Biology at Victoria University and gained B Sc. and M. Sc. Degrees in Zoology. He was a member of the Zoology staff at the university for several years teaching a range of classes.

During the next phase of his life, he and family moved to Motueka. Here he soon became involved in environmental issues and was appointed to a number of boards. He played a leading role in the establishment of Kahurangi National Park.

On returning to Wellington a few years ago Otari became his primary interest. This was when I got to know him best. I have been guiding groups at Otari for many years and Bill joined me in this activity with enthusiasm. We often worked together and developed an act which involved disparaging each other as opportunities arose to the amusement of all. One younger member of a group said the "Plant stuff was a bit boring but the jokes were great", hardly a ringing endorsement. Another older man thought we should have a TV show, but then followed that with "It could be like The Two Fat Ladies". I'm still puzzling over that one. We were greatly encouraged by the enthusiastic response of the public to our stories of the fascinating ways plants live their lives in the forest.

Bill strongly promoted Otari as a place of national importance, being the only Botanic Garden entirely devoted to New Zealand native plants. In recent years visitor numbers, both local and further afield, have increased steeply. Groups coming for guided tours, including from cruise ships, have also increased markedly. This encouraging trend is partly due to improvements made by the City Council three years ago -- a new alpine garden; an improved Information Centre; and, most attractive of all to many people, the Treetop Walkway -- and to the setting up of the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust as a voluntary support group. The enthusiasm of a number of individuals, including Bill, has also helped. Bill has gone but the impetus of his ideas, particularly for an Education Centre, lives on.

Our sympathy goes to his wife Chris, and their sons, Robert (Taunton, England) and Mark (Auckland)

Contributed by Dr. John Dawson

Call for Candidates for the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust Board

The Board has set the date for the next Annual General Meeting as **Thursday, June 16, 7.30pm**. We are eager to have a good range of candidates for election to the Board. If you have ideas about how our wonderful Bush Reserve and Native Botanic Garden could be made even better, and would like to be involved in the developments over the coming years, this is your chance. You will need to be nominated and seconded by two members of the Trust and should also provide information about yourself, including why you are interested in Otari-Wilton's Bush and information about any qualifications or skills which could be useful for one or more of our varied

Call for Candidates cont.

activities. If you would like to discuss this before making a decision contact any member of the Board.

To obtain nomination forms: before April 4 please apply to: The Secretary, Margaret Crimp Ph.475 3263. After April 4 apply to Athol Swann, Ph. 472 8417

Revegetation Project - report of progress

It's worth a walk up to the tip-face to see how things are going, particularly the growth and planting that have taken place in the last year. The purpose of the revegetation project, has been to prevent erosion in the neighbourhood of the stream and the stream banks, as well as preventing the spread of pest plants down into the Reserve. We have now accomplished enough for to see these benefits progressing.

The 'project' is still very much a collaborative one involving the GWRC / WCC / Otari staff / and the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust.

In the last year with the management by the 'Kennett Bros.' -- namely Jonathan Kennett and Bronwen Wall' we have been able to take some pressure off the Otari staff, who were being diverted from their 'core' duties, to help with our project, Thankfully the increase of the WCC's 'Environmental Grant' from \$6000.00 to \$10,000.00 in 2003, allowed us to plant a lot more - concentrating on the quality of planting, as well as relieving the Otari staff.

In addition GWRC have steadily increased their support. In the early days of the project, Kevin Worsely who was Snr. Bio-security Officer, based in Masterton, came down often, and recognised the Kaiwharawhara Stream area as a 'Key Native Ecosystem' - which gave it some priority for pest plant control. The aggressive and determined grasp that blackberry, old man's beard, wandering willy and others, had in the valley, is now well under control, with wave after wave of GWRC contractors coming in - spraying then clearing the debris. GWRC followed this up with an aerial survey, late last year [2003]. of the persistent pest plants.

Kevin Worsely retired from GWRC at the end of the year. We're very grateful to him for his interest and assistance. Without this it would not have been possible for the project to have advanced at such a pace.

The support given to the Trust by the GWRC's Community Environmental Care Programme, awarded to the Trust in 2001, was to have been completed during this years planting season. Nevertheless we have requested the GWRC to continue their support through to the end of the year, and we hope a little beyond. Our plan for this year, is to again plant, about 8000 plants, the same number as last year. As the number of plants planted increase, the 'plant care' required increases. For this reason we will require support to run into the year 2005 to complete our valley project.

Once again Jonathan and Bronwen have been outstanding. Their management of the project, has been innovative, well considered, and of a high professional standard. Their monitoring of plant

Revegetation Report cont.

growth, the placement of various plant species as well as plant response to the varied micro-climate in the valley, has a value that can be applied to future and adjacent plantings - and there is a lot to be done in future years in the Kaiwharawhara Stream area. Throughout the year they sort out volunteers from every quarter, and from every quarter they came. On one occasion 150 volunteers working on a hillside, must have been a sight to be seen. The Trust are extremely appreciative to both Jonathan and Bronwen for the quality of their management of the 'project'.

Within a recent amendment to the 'Health and Safety Act' the Trust has obligations to provide for the safety of volunteers. Jonathan and Bronwen - have provided us with their 'guidelines', and Myfanwy Hill, who is the WCC's Volunteer Co-ordinator, is also helping the Trust who are developing their own guidelines. This is in progress.

Contributed by Jock Fleming -- Project co-ordinator for the Trust

A Word from the Valley

“... Be-bidilly oten boten Boe-boe be-deeten daten ...”

I remember as a child at primary school being taught an Aboriginal rain dance. That Christmas, the skies opened and the Hutt River burst its banks. The Hutt Road was closed due to slips, and the army was called in to help transport the commuters home from Wellington city. My mother arrived home from work one day in the back of an army truck.

The adult in me looks back and recognises the Aboriginal tune as something made up by our teacher to keep us out of mischief, but the thrill I felt at being able to command up rain as a nine-year-old has not left me.

I've been tempted to try that summonsing dance again in recent months. National Radio news constantly reports drought in the farming districts around the country, and the stress on the vegetables and flowers in everyone's garden is obvious, and yet the young trees in Kaiwharawhara Valley keep plugging on.

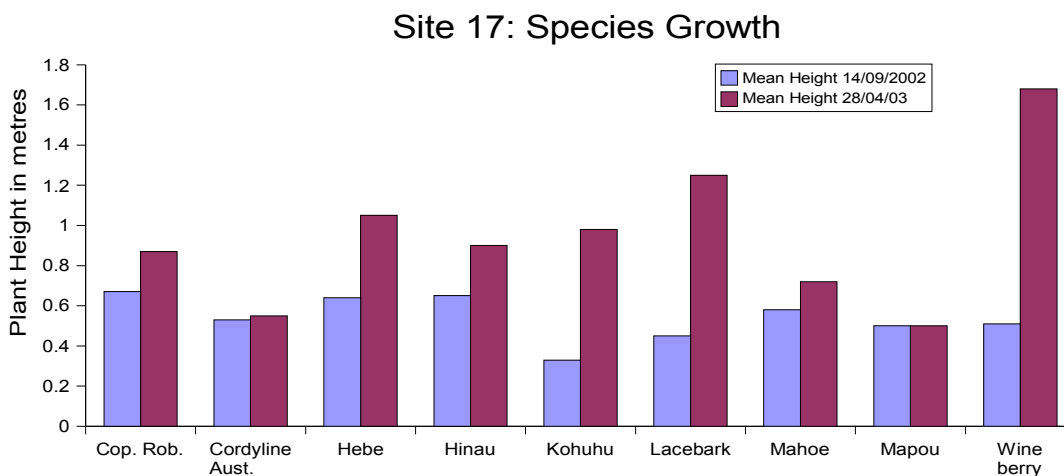
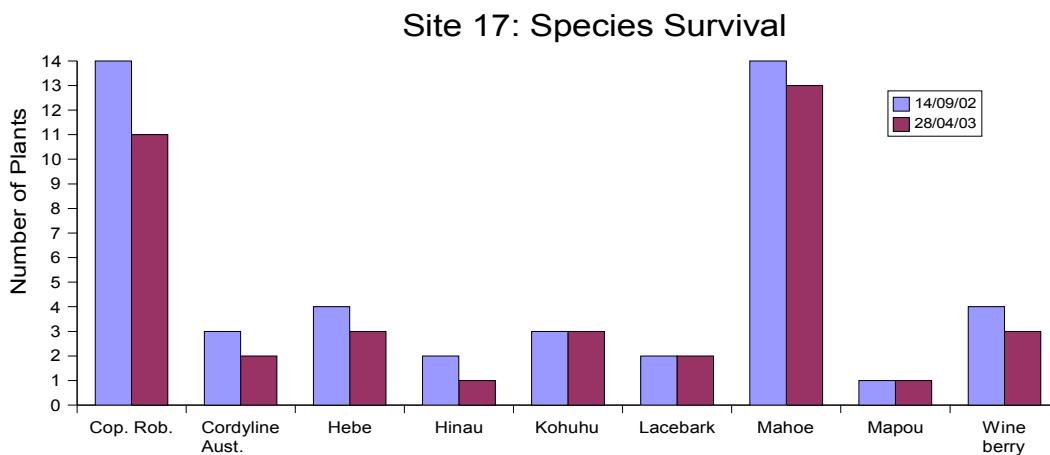
Trees aren't the only things growing down in that valley though. The weeds have been galloping along at a phenomenal rate, and we have been hard put to keep them in check. We've continued with a once-a-month plant care session, which takes place the second Saturday of each month through to May. It's vital that we allow the tree seedlings a chance to grow, to catch the light and not to have to compete with the swamping weeds for that all important and rare summer rain.

The plant care sessions aren't arduous. In fact, they can become quite addictive ... “One more weed and this section will be totally clear” It's a bit like Christmas really; uncovering all kinds of surprises, wrapped up in convolvulus and other such nasties. And you don't have to be David Bellamy to sort the weeds from the trees. So please, spare us a thought and join us for one of these Saturday morning sessions sometime. You'll enjoy it.

A Word from the Valley cont.

However, one plant care session a month was never going to be enough to really keep the weeds in check. We now have 16 sites planted out and while a few are able to look after themselves, the majority still need tending. Extra help came in the form of a new group, the Global Network Volunteers. Some of you may have seen them down in the valley occasionally. These are young people who come to New Zealand from all around the world on their “O.E.” and spend from two weeks to two months doing volunteer works around Wellington. We’ve been using them to help with the weeding and monitor plant growth on the sites. Thanks to their efforts, we’ve been able to consolidate a database of the plant survival and growth on most of the planted sites.

Here are graphs from site 17, which was planted on Arbor Day in 2002. The revegetation value of any given species is determined by the species ability to survive *and* grow, and these factors vary from site to site.



As I sit here, writing this report, rain drums down incessantly on the roof. It’s been raining persistently since yesterday morning. Based on what I’ve confessed about my early education, you might hold me responsible for all this precipitation, and I can’t really blame you. I can only promise that I have not yet murmured one word of that Aboriginal rain dance out loud, and yet ...

“Raindrops keep falling on my head and I’m happy”

Contributed by Bronwen Wall

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Swimming pools in the Kaiwharawhara

A recent newsletter article described the unearthing of The St Johns Pool below The Sanctuary

Pools were important to Wilton and Wadestown youth before the World War 2. Small children paddled and splashed in the pool at “the little picnic ground” at the foot of the Red trail, and older children built dams at the bend in The Troup Picnic ground - they still do, but for real swimming we had to go further afield

Most adventurous, and usually unsupervised was the “eighteen”, or “eighteen footer”. This deep hole, probably marking the original confluence of the two tributaries that formed the Kaiwharawhara Stream, was reached easily from Ngaio or Wadestown. Several family alliances were formed in the long grass surrounding the pool. Wilton Road youth used the “blackberry path”, which dropped directly from Wilton Road, crossed Blackbridge Road, and ran directly to the creek. The path is now marked by a small church hall. Passage to the water tunnel was easy along the sewer pipes or river flats. The bottom of the valley was quite open, frequently swept by fire. There was little bush below Archibald’s “over the road” paddocks, the site now of Bowen Hospital. For 60 years, much of the scrub on the south side of the railway line, the north facing slopes below Wadestown, were burnt out by flying embers, or by match box farming. Fires right to the boundaries of Otari were common until the fifties.

Short-lived, was “The Relief Workers Pool”, about 100 metre below The Black Bridge, where the stream ran through a very short gorge. It was said to be 9ft deep. Access was by means of “the blackberry track” or down a steep rock face from The Old Farm Road. About 1934 an impressive dam was constructed using corrugated iron and railway sleepers. Very proper “his and hers” dressing sheds were painted green and there was strict supervision. Guiding light was Harry Keswick, of Wilton Road. He was a tramway’s motorman who alarmed the district when he dived down to remove the outlet plug and was trapped. Harry was killed in The Western Desert. It was said that he put his head up to have a look around. The pool was swept away by flood waters in 1936 or 1937, though the dressing sheds survived in the rapidly encroaching blackberry for many years.

Sadly, being depression years, there were very few photos taken of either pool. None seem to have survived.

Contributed by John Riseborough

Report from Otari-Wilton's Bush Staff

The staff were sad to hear of the death of Bill Winstanley on Christmas eve. Bill was a strong and passionate advocate of Otari-Wilton's Bush and we will miss his knowledge and humour. Tim and I represented the staff at Bill's funeral.

There has been lots happening at Otari-Wilton's Bush over the summer. Plenty of regular rain means good plant growth and of course good weed growth as well. There have been so few spraying days due to the wet and windy conditions, that some areas have got away on us but we are managing to fight back now. Storms during January also caused extra work with many branches down and huge amounts of leaf litter deposited on paths and tracks.

New direction signs around the circular, waterfall, blue, red and yellow tracks are all in place and we are in the process of checking that everything is correct. There will be some minor modifications required. The signs are made from macrocarpa with the wording routed into them and look very good. New signs for the Wilton Walkway, dracophyllum and wild gardens are due soon.

A new retaining wall has been built to prevent erosion of the stream bank on the circular walk.

The up-grade of parts of the Circular Walk will start on Monday 9 February. This work will include edging parts of the track, building cross drains and levelling and replenishing the track surface.

The framework of the Canterbury collection has been planted and the area mulched. A more diverse range of species will be added over time as they become available.

The guides have been very busy over the holiday period with cruise ship passengers and there are several more ships still to come.

Last week we received notification from the New Zealand Gardens Trust that Otari-Wilton's Bush has been endorsed as a "Garden of National Significance". Five photos demonstrating the different aspects of Otari have been chosen for display on the Gardens Trust's website along with some text. Staff and volunteers worked hard to ready the gardens for inspection and we would like to thank the Thursday volunteers who helped us.

Sightings of native fauna over the past two months include a forest gecko that literally dropped in onto the deck and lay there stunned for a while. Friendly male tomtits have been seen down on the bush margins of the Troup picnic lawn and a shining cuckoo has been spotted in the large kowhai trees on the boundary with Otari School.

Robyn Smith

Curator Manager, Otari-Wilton's Bush February 2004

OTARI - WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

Membership Application Form

Our membership year is from 1 April to 31 March. New members joining after 1 February will have the membership accredited to the following year. Membership entitles you to receive our newsletter and receive notification of all forthcoming activities at Otari - Wilton's Bush.

I wish to join the Trust
(name of new member)

Postal Address
.....
.....

Telephone ().....(Home) E-mail.....

Billing Name and Address
(if different from above)

Subscription:	Double/Family	\$15	<input type="text"/>
	Individual	\$10	<input type="text"/>
	Student/Unwaged	\$5	<input type="text"/>

Donation: \$

Total (please enclose your cheque)
Payment:

The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible. We will automatically send you a receipt for tax purposes. We regret we cannot process payments by Credit Card.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please indicate the areas of interest to you from the following list:

- Work parties
- Weekend hosting at Otari Information Centre
- Fund raising

Please send your application to: The Treasurer,
Otari Wilton's Bush,
160 Wilton Road,
Wilton,
Wellington.